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UNCLAS HARARE 001998

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT WSSD; HARARE

11. Under headline "West's concern on Zim baffling" the government-controlled daily "The Herald" dedicated its August 30 editorial to encouraging the West to seek a face-to-face audience with the government of Zimbabwe to discuss issues of concern. Excerpts:

12. "The so-called world leaders seem to have a lot of concern for Zimbabwe to the extent that they want to discuss the country at the on-going Earth Summit in South Africa. While this concern seems commendable, what is baffling most right thinking Zimbabweans is that none of these international leaders want to engage the country's leaders about what they perceive to have gone wrong in Zimbabwe. . .? Ever since the land issue became more pronounced, the Tony Blair government has avoided Zimbabwe like the plague. The American government has followed suit and made pronouncements on Zimbabwe based on biased British propaganda churned out by its paid local private media. This is why a whole Assistant Secretary of State of the U.S. can publicly lie that the food shortages in Zimbabwe were by the ZANU PF government's land reform exercise despite the fact that this was caused by a severe drought that affected not only the country, but the sub-region as a whole. . . The Canadians have also fallen into the stupid trap. . . The Australians will of course not be outdone and have already fashioned charges of ethnic cleansing against the Zimbabwean government.

"Even the Secretary-General of the UN, Mr. Kofi Anan who we have always regarded as a reasonable man, had to add his voice on Zimbabwe's condemnation. . . He too was scared to be seen in Zimbabwe lest the ZANU PF government would open his eyes to the truth, which he would have difficulty in dealing with to the satisfaction of the super power nations. What is now evident is that all these super power nations are so afraid of little Zimbabwe that they would dare not come and confront the ZANU PF government. The government would certainly be too glad to not only host them but discuss the alleged abuses of human rights, the unfair dispossession of whites of their land, the suppression of Press freedom, the clampdown on the opposition, among other allegations that take their fancy."

SULLIVAN